

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2006**

Unapproved 8-23-06  
e-mailed

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Walter A. Alcorn, At-Large  
John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District  
Frank A. de la Fe, Dranesville District  
Suzanne F. Harsel, Braddock District  
Kenneth Lawrence, Providence District  
Rodney Lusk, Lee District

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Fred Selden, Director, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)  
Deborah Albert, Planner, PD, DPZ  
Daniel Rathbone, Division Chief, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT)  
Andrea Dorlester, Fairfax County Park Authority  
Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office  
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission Office

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

SEE ATTACHMENT A

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Chairman Walter A. Alcorn convened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. in Conference Rooms 4/5 at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman Alcorn explained that the Board of Supervisors had authorized formation of a committee to develop guidance for transit-oriented development (TOD) in Fairfax County. He said the committee was still in the process of gathering information upon which to base guiding TOD principles for inclusion in the Policy Plan. He noted that the guest speaker tonight was Mariia Zimmerman, Vice President for Policy, Reconnecting America, Center for Transit Oriented Development. (A copy of her PowerPoint presentation is in the date file.)

Highlights of Ms. Zimmerman's presentation included:

- Transit-oriented Development (TOD) goals:
  - Improve mobility of people and goods;
  - Catalyst for economic development and redevelopment;
  - Link housing with economic and community opportunities;
  - Create a sense of place;
- Transportation is the second major expense for the average American household after housing;
- Transportation costs vary widely across the county;
- Transit ridership increases 20-40 percent near stations along with a 20-40 percent reduction in driving within TOD station areas;
- Available transportation choices should include transit, car sharing, biking, and walking along with parking management.
- Transportation network should be frequent and reliable;
- Transportation costs can affect the affordability of housing;
- Demographics of communities and housing preferences changing;
- Desirability of living near TOD increasing;
- TOD can be used as a tool for placemaking, congestion management, economic growth and improved quality of life;
- TOD guidelines for one-half mile radius around transit stations;
  - Increase "location efficiency" so people can walk, bike, and take transit;
  - Boost transit ridership and minimize traffic;
  - Provide rich mix of housing, shopping, and recreational choices;
  - Provide value for public and private sectors, new and existing residents;
  - Create a sense of place.
- TOD development should be within five minutes walk from station with a town center and joint development on publicly owned land with rail systems;
- Capture value created by TOD to support communities;

- Increased land values;
- Investment in community services and infrastructure;
- Lower household costs for transportation;
- Decreased tax rate burden;
- Create mixed income neighborhoods.

Ms. Zimmerman discussed the following transit-oriented developments:

- Evanston, Illinois – mature, suburban community which had lost population and businesses; economic development strategy developed to target new and future growth around four commuter rails stations with links to heavy rail with residential, retail, and commercial development; public dollars used to provide infrastructure improvements.
- Plano, Texas – an old cow town that was developed with townhouses and condominiums which provided catalyst for reinvestment in old downtown;
- Pleasant Hill and Fruitdale, California – Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) villages funded by grants and federal funds to provide housing incentives within one-third mile of transit station with bonus for low-incoming housing.
- Ohlone-Chynoweth, California – public/private partnership development of suburban transit-oriented low residential community of 20 dwelling units per acre near San Jose with affordable housing.
- Engelwood, Colorado – low density city center TOD including a WalMart, stand-alone stores, surface parking, residential units, public uses on 55 acres downtown adjacent to the a rail station.

Summarizing her presentation, Ms. Zimmerman noted that TOD could have a positive affect on the economy and the environment and it offered an opportunity for redevelopment. In addition, she said it could provide community benefits such as public space, safety, vibrancy, and cost of living savings for households. Ms. Zimmerman indicated that the success of urban and suburban TOD required common goals, definitions and expectations; a balance between placemaking and transit system needs; a clear framework to reduce complexity, time, uncertainty and costs; and community, private, and public partnerships.

In response to a question from Michael Horwatt, Esquire, Ms. Zimmerman said the recommendation that one-half mile was an appropriate walkable distance to a transit area was based on a comfortable ten minute walk to a station, but could vary depending on the quality of the walk and the availability of other modes of transportation such as shuttle buses.

Responding to another question from Mr. Horwatt, Ms. Zimmerman said that it was possible for affordable housing units to be undistinguishable from market rate units and one of the ways to do that in the interior was by using standard instead of upgraded materials. She noted that Fruitdale

and Ohlone-Chenoweth, in San Jose, California, were examples of mixed income transit-oriented development.

In response to a question from Roger Diedrich, Sierra Club, Ms. Zimmerman said that the current demand for housing near transit was from couples without children and single persons. She said a significant increase in the demand for housing near transit was expected as the "baby-boomer" population aged.

Ms. Zimmerman responded to a question from Deborah Smith, FairGrowth, about attracting retail uses to transit-oriented development.

Commissioner Lawrence pointed out that the quarter or half mile radius was not applicable in all cases because each transit site was different.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Harsel, Ms. Zimmerman said the design of a station was very important in determining how long it would take to arrive at a station platform from a parking lot or another mode of transportation.

Chairman Alcorn asked Fred Selden, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, to gather information on one-half and one-quarter mile distances from development to a transit station.

Charlie Hall, Providence District, said he would be interested in seeing information about the relationship between the distance to a station and ridership.

Joe Stowers said that he had information on the relationship between distance to a transit station and ridership that he would provide to Chairman Alcorn. He also said good station design was very important to encourage transit usage.

Paul Kraucunas, Virginia Department of Transportation, commented that the quality of a walk to transit was as important as the distance and uses such as coffee shops or newspaper stands would make walking more desirable. Ms. Zimmerman said that such uses could increase the cost of developing a station and in some cases funding sources, such as the federal government, would not absorb the additional cost. She said in other cases developers had gotten creative and used good design to overcome impediments to development. She cited Mockingbird Station in Dallas, Texas, which had been built on an old rail line in a ravine, as an example.

Irfan Ali, with Georgelas Group, commented that developers could play a role in developing retail uses near transit stations.

Daniel Rathbone, Department of Transportation, said that the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority had up-to-date information on the use of transit in relation to the distance to a station. He asked Ms. Zimmerman if she knew of any cases where local jurisdictions had imposed parking maximums for transit-oriented development. Ms. Zimmerman said she would find out and report back to him.

Chairman Alcorn announced that the next two meetings would be citizen panels to be held on August 2, 2006 in Conference Rooms 4/5 of the Government Center and on September 6, 2006 at the Lee District Governmental Center. He also said a strawman document with proposed language for TOD guidance would be distributed at the August meeting.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Walter A. Alcorn, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Office of the Planning Commission of Fairfax County, Virginia.

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved:

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission

Attachment:  
List of attendees

TOD COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE, JULY 27, 2006 ATTACHMENT A

| Name                | Organization                       |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
|                     |                                    |
| Albert, Deborah     | DPZ                                |
| Alcorn, Walter      | PC                                 |
| Ali, Irfan          | Georgelasgroup.com                 |
| Bennett, Jody       | Hunter Mill Defense League History |
| Byers, John         | PC                                 |
| Cetron, Ari         | Connection Newspapers              |
| Cook, Lauren        | Walsh Colucci                      |
| De la Fe, Frank     | PC                                 |
| Dentel-Post, Colin  |                                    |
| Diedrich, Roger     | Sierra Club                        |
| Dorlester, Andrea   | FCPA                               |
| DuMetz, Lisa        | Urban Trans                        |
| Edwards, Dave       |                                    |
| Fairfield, Jeff     | Launders Trust                     |
| Hall, Charlie       | Providence District                |
| Harcketts, John     |                                    |
| Harsel, Suzanne     | PC                                 |
| Hooper, Fran        | Homeowner                          |
| Horn, Loretta       | W&M Properties                     |
| Horn, Tom           | W&M Properties                     |
| Horwatt, Michael    | Horwatt Law Offices                |
| Hunter, Richard     | WCI Communities                    |
| Kraucunas, Paul     | VDOT                               |
| Lauretti, Keely     | Citizen                            |
| Lawrence, Bob       | Reed Smith                         |
| Lawrence, Kenneth   | PC                                 |
| Lippa, Barbara      | PC staff                           |
| Lusk, Rodney        | PC                                 |
| Ormsby, Sally       | FFC Citizens Cmte Land Use/Trans.  |
| Pastorkovich, Steve | Briarwood                          |
| Rathbone, Dan       | FCDOT                              |
| Riveros Albert      | Sleepy Hollow citizen              |
| Rodeffer, Linda     | PC Staff                           |
| Sargeant, Tim       | Mount Vernon                       |
| Schwartz, Stewart   | Smarter Growth                     |
| Selden, Fred        | DPZ PD                             |
| Smith, Deborah      | FairGrowth                         |
| Stallman, Sandy     | FCPA                               |
| Stowers, Joe        |                                    |
| Tejani, Shams       | Comstock Companies                 |
| Ulfelder, John      | West*Group                         |